

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr J Reynard  
Headteacher  
Seaford Primary School  
Wilkinson Way  
Seaford  
East Sussex  
BN25 2JF

Dear Mr Reynard

Ofsted 2008-09 subject survey inspection programme: mathematics

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 March 2009 to look at work in mathematics.

As outlined in our initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the effectiveness of the school's approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the subject, mathematics, was judged to be satisfactory.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory and standards are average.

- Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and standards broadly in line with the national average, although with some fluctuation from year to year. Some pupils lost ground earlier in Key Stage 2 due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The school is working hard to help these pupils catch up.
- The school sets challenging targets for each year group, aiming to maintain and build upon the above average standards achieved in Year 2. Standards are rising in response to improvements in teaching and more effective use of assessment information to track all pupils' progress throughout the year.

- Pupils enjoy learning and apply themselves well to their work. They participate in lessons with enthusiasm and are well motivated.
- Attainment in mental mathematics has improved as a result of a whole school focus on developing teachers' expertise and pupils' skills.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is satisfactory.

- Good teaching in Reception and Years 1 and 2 engages pupils through a stimulating variety of practical tasks that cater for their different styles of learning. Pupils use a wide range of equipment to support learning and enjoy activities such as buying packets of seeds in the florist's shop, calculating the cost of a half-price burger and creating graphs on a laptop computer.
- The quality of teaching is more variable at Key Stage 2 and ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. In the main, differences revolve around the use of accurate assessment information to plan work that is appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils. Occasionally, pupils spend too long listening to the teacher before being engaged in active learning, and sometimes they do not have enough practical apparatus to help them.
- Occasionally, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of either the quality or quantity of pupils' work.
- Some teachers' marking is helpful and constructive. Other teachers do not grasp the opportunity to show pupils what they need to do next or involve them in assessing their own progress.

### Quality of the mathematics curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory.

- The well-planned Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum provides children with a rich variety of experiences that engage them in purposeful play and learning, both in the classroom and outside. This creative approach to learning continues into Key Stage 1 and builds effectively on pupils' knowledge and skills.
- The school is working to infuse a greater degree of creativity into the Key Stage 2 curriculum where mathematics is still largely taught as a discrete subject. Teachers are exploring links with other subjects and are being encouraged to find innovative ways to deliver the new mathematics framework, for example through 'Learning Adventures'. The school has also invested in a range of interactive software to enhance learning across the school, including video conferencing.
- The school is making good progress in finding ways to integrate 'using and applying mathematics' into the weekly planning for each class. Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematical puzzles and investigations and remember the recent 'Maths Week' with enthusiasm.

### Leadership and management of mathematics

The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory.

- Improving teaching and learning in mathematics is a key priority in the current school improvement plan. Until recently, the main focus has been on literacy. The impact of actions taken is being evaluated as the year progresses through

analysis of data on pupils' progress. Measurable improvement has already been made, particularly in pupils' skills in mental mathematics.

- The role of the subject leader has recently been given a higher status within the school (Leader of Learning). This has given the post holder more strategic influence in determining what improvements are needed and how these are to be achieved.
- Thorough analysis of test data identifies accurately where weaknesses lie and the school takes immediate action to tackle these through training for teachers. Lesson observations, however, are not rigorous enough to ensure that all staff have a precise understanding of what makes for effective teaching and learning.
- The school has introduced more rigorous systems for tracking individual pupils' progress from term to term. These are helping to ensure that suitably challenging targets are set for pupils to achieve each year.

Subject issue: the effectiveness of the school's approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

- Training is targeted at the specific needs of members of staff. For example, training and development for teaching assistants has resulted in their better subject knowledge and more effective support for pupils in lessons.
- The subject leader's skills are being developed in monitoring planning, assessment data and pupils' work. She has also attended training to extend her own knowledge of the Key Stage 2 curriculum.
- All staff receive training through regular meetings and training days. This has contributed to improvements in the teaching of mental mathematics, investigations and problem solving.
- The school is beginning to use teachers who have identified strengths in teaching mathematics to demonstrate good practice and work alongside colleagues.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 so that pupils make consistently good progress and reach above average standards by Year 6
- sharpening the systems for assessing pupils' progress, marking their work and involving pupils in assessing their own progress
- increasing the rigour of lesson observations to ensure a common understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics in the school. As explained in our previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Carole Skinner  
Additional Inspector